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ACTION:

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, SHUM, US, AR

SUBJECT: TODMAN MEETING WITH FON MINISTER MONTES

ACTION: SECSTATE WASHDC

 BUENOS AIRES 6138

REF: Buenos Aires 6127

1. Asst Secretary Todman accompanied by Chargé called on FonMin Vice Admiral Oscar Antonio Montes at 1800 July 15. Montes opened the discussion by observing with some emotion that he appreciated Todman's interest in the health of former Foreign Minister Guzzetti who is recovering from a terrorist attack in Bethesda Naval Hospital. He proceeded to give stress to the importance which the GOA attaches to satisfactory relations with the United States -- he said QUOTE We are prepared to make a major effort and give maximum emphasis since we both have much to gain from good relations. END QUOTE He offered his personal attention to solve problems should this be necessary, and said he would even be happy to deal

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by telephone. Amb Todman responded that he shared the FonMinister's desire to resolve any outstanding problems.

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2. Responding to a question, Amb Todman said he had seen all the officials he had hoped to see and had had a productive meeting with President Videla, during which he had expressed the USG interest in the ratification by the GOA of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, principally because of the effect of that action on ~~XXXXX~~ other countries. Since the GOA had accepted safeguards, there would be no additional degree of commitment to foreign regulation. Montes responded that he had talked of this matter with Secretary Vance and stated with some emphasis that QUOTE We are going to have a resolution of this matter which will be satisfactory to both countries. END QUOTE.

3. Amb Todman stated that he had also asked President Videla if he would consider the suitability of Argentina's signing the Interamerican Convention on Human Rights, observing that it advocated the same principles as existed in the Argentine Constitution and which had been endorsed and accepted elsewhere by the GOA. He noted that this would have a favorable effect on hemispheric opinion, as was the case with the signature


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by Peru. Deputy Foreign Minister Allara stated intra-governmental consultations on this point were currently going on within the GOA. Montes stated that he would be in a position to inform Secretary Vance at the UNGA about the actions the GOA would take on the IACHR and NFZ matters.

4. Deputy Foreign Minister Allara stated that the GOA needed USG technical cooperation and assistance in the area of nuclear power. Amb Todman stated he would raise this issue in Washington and undertake to arrange appropriate meetings between US and Argentine scientists or officials.

5. Amb Todman reiterated the deep USG commitment to the cause of human rights and the central place it occupies in our foreign policy. He observed that certain cases of human rights abuses had generated particularly deep foreign concern, which was often widely shared, not only in the Executive Branch, but in the Congress. One such case which he wished to bring to the Foreign Minister's attention was that of Dr. Mauricio Lopez and he sought the Foreign Office's best efforts to obtain information on Dr. ~~XX~~ Lopez' ~~XXXX~~ current whereabouts. Amb Todman said that Dr. Lopez' case was typical of many which were generating much concern abroad. He


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would be sending a list of these cases to the Foreign Minister in the hope that the latter's personal interest might elicit new or additional information about them. Amb Todman noted that he had met with the representatives of the Jehovah's Witnesses who stated that they were satisfied with the handling of their case and were expecting a favorable decision of the Supreme Court on the appeal currently before it. He noted that in no case has there ever been any suggestion that members of this church were engaged in subversive activities. The Foreign Minister readily agreed that this was the case, though he commented wryly that some of the religious scruples expressed had been strengthened by the prospect of imminent military service.

6. Mr. Todman made reference to the government's decree banning the anti-semitic publication Cabildo, commenting that he was impressed by what Min Martinez de Hoz had told him of the specific rejection in the decree of racism as a fundamental government policy. The Foreign Minister stated with considerable vigor that he had made a specific public declaration on this subject prior to the Cabildo decree because the assertion of racism was especially objectionable to him.

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7. Amb Todman expressed appreciation for the satisfactory way in which outstanding problems of investment, aviation and Maritime regulations ~~XXXXX~~ have been resolved.

8. Foreign Minister stated the Ambassadors of several unspecified Arab countries had suggested that Argentina might be a mediator in the mid-East dispute in cooperation with the United States, and he was prepared to do this if Argentina could be helpful. In response to a question he said that ~~XXXXXXXXX~~ the Israeli Ambassador had not yet raised the possibility of mediation with him. Amb Todman said he would cable Secretary Vance to inform him of this development.

9. The FonMin was asked how the GOA viewed the problem of international tension in the Andes and the possibilities for conflict. Montes stated that the GOA saw no imminent problem. While there was always a latent problem, his government considered that it would have to become considerably more aggravated before actual conflict was likely.

10. Sub Secretary Allara observed that the USG had not yet approved the FY 77 FMS credit agreement. He said with emphasis that the GOA considered this an important issue and that if it were impossible to

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proceed with this credit, there would be strong reactions within some sectors of the government, the outcome of which he could not foresee. Amb Todman responded that the Administration's efforts had been devoted to getting the best possible security assistance bill for FY 78 through the Congress and that, consequently, the question of handling this credit had been deferred. He undertook to raise the issue upon his return to Washington.

11. The FonMin closed the meeting with a reiteration of the importance he placed on good relations with the United States and his particular satisfaction with the success of Amb Todman's visit.

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